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ABSTRACT

Selected comparisons of international and domestic undergraduates at the University of Southern California (USC) were undertaken, using data from the annual Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS) and the Undergraduate Student Survey. On-campus enrollment data for these two student groups are presented by sex for Fall 1978, 1979, and 1980. USC was the first choice of over two-thirds of international and domestic undergraduates. USC's academic prestige and the association of a USC degree with getting ahead professionally were the most important reasons undergraduates chose the school. Reactions of the two student groups to the following possible reasons for choosing to attend USC are presented: academic prestige, social prestige, parent's advice, teacher/counselor's advice, post-college social contacts, financial aid offer, course offerings, get ahead professionally, help get into graduate school, and be in Southern California. Business and engineering were the majors most attractive to international and domestic undergraduates. Engineering was the planned major for almost 30 percent of the international students as compared to only 11 percent of the domestic students. Business administration was the planned major for 23 percent of the international respondents and 20 percent of the domestic respondents. About 50 percent of USC's undergraduates planned to earn at least a master's degree during their careers: 37 percent of the international and 20 percent of the domestic undergraduates planned master's degrees at USC. Obtaining a degree was the most important academically related goal of both student groups. (SW)

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International and Domestic Undergraduates: Enrollment Trends and Characteristics (OIS Research Memo 81-105)

by

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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OIS Research Memo 81-105
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International and Domestic Undergraduates: Enrollment Trends and Characteristics

by
J.U. Overall

This memorandum contains selected comparisons of international and domestic undergraduates. Data were obtained from 1) the annual Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS) fall enrollment reports filed with federal and state agencies by the Office of Institutional Studies (OIS) and 2) the Undergraduate Student Survey completed by a sample of USC students during the spring and summer of 1980.

I. HEGIS Enrollment Data

In recent years, international students have come to represent an increasing proportion of USC's undergraduate student population. The largest number of these undergraduates were enrolled in the fall of 1979. In the fall of 1980, their proportion of total first-time enrollment and the actual number enrolling appear to have declined (see Table One). Table One also indicates that international undergraduates represented nearly the same proportion of total undergraduate enrollment (14%) in the fall of 1980 as they did in the fall of 1978.

Table One

International and Domestic Undergraduates by Sex, Enrolled On-Campus in Fall 1978, 1979 and 1980*

	Male			Female			Total		
	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980	1978	1979	1980
International	1348	1602	1333	644	711	664	1992	2313	1997
(% of total)	(15.4)	(18.6)	(15.9)	(10.7)	(11.7)	(11.0)	(13.5)	(15.7)	(13.9)
Domestic	7415	7026	7016	5351	5371	5351	12766	12397	12367
(% of total)	(84.6)	(81.4)	(84.1)	(89.3)	(88.3)	(89.0)	(86.5)	(84.3)	(86.1)
Total	8763	8628	8349	5995	6082	6015	14758	14710	14364

* Information taken from the Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS) Fall Enrollment reports for the years indicated

It should be noted that HEGIS reporting guidelines require that any enrollee who cannot be allocated into the male/female or domestic/international classification be prorated to these categories using ratios for known data. This proration had little effect on data for fall 1978 and 1980, but may have resulted in a slightly inflated count of fall 1979 international enrollees. Proportional representation of international students using non-prorated data was about 5% less for 1978 and 1980 totals than that found using prorated data; the non-prorated total was 1.7% less than the prorated total for 1979. Percentage enrollment trends were not affected by data type.

II. Selected comparisons of international and domestic undergraduate responses to the 1980 Undergraduate Student Survey (A description of the Survey sample is provided in Appendix I)

A. Interest in/Reasons for Selecting USC

* *USC was the first choice of over 2/3 of international and domestic undergraduates* (see Table Two)

Table Two

USC was First Choice for % of Undergraduate Survey Respondents*

	International Students (n=52)	Domestic Students (n=375)
% indicating USC was first choice	69%	73%

* Information taken from the Office of Institutional Studies' Spring 1980 Undergraduate Student Survey

About 70% of the undergraduate respondents to the survey indicated they favored USC over all other institutions to which they applied. These percentages are similar to, but slightly lower than, ones based on first-time international and domestic freshman responses to the American Council on Education's Freshman Survey administered at USC in the fall of 1980 (see OIS Research Memo 81-103).

* *USC's "Academic prestige" and the association of a USC degree with "Getting ahead professionally" were the most important reasons undergraduates chose to come here* (see Table Three)

International and domestic undergraduates' reactions to 10 of 18 possible reasons for choosing USC are presented below.

Table Three

Reasons Selected by More than 20% of Undergraduate Survey Respondents as "Very Important" for Attending USC*

	International Students (n=51)	Domestic Students (n=364)
Academic Prestige	61%	50%
Social Prestige	37%	+
Parent's Advice	24%	22%
Teacher/Counselor's Advice	24%	+
Post-College Social Contacts	21%	34%
Financial Aid Offer	23%	29%
Course Offerings	43%	49%
Get Ahead Professionally	61%	67%
Help Get Into Graduate School	39%	32%
Be in Southern California	41%	33%

* Information taken from the Office of Institutional Studies' Spring 1980 Undergraduate Student Survey; 18 reasons were presented.

+ Item selected by 20% or less of the respondents

Over 50% of the international and domestic respondents to the Undergraduate Survey selected "Academic prestige" and USC's association with "Getting ahead professionally" as primary reasons for pursuing degrees here. These two reasons were also the primary ones given by first-time international and domestic freshmen in their responses to the Fall 1980 ACE Freshman Survey (see OIS Research Memo 81-103). Ten of the 18 reasons presented as possible motivations for attending USC were selected by more than 20% of the international respondents; eight of the same reasons were also selected by more than 20% of the domestic respondents.

B. Educational Plans

* *Business and Engineering are the areas most attractive to international and domestic undergraduates* (see Table Four)

Over 50% of the international respondents and 30% of the domestic respondents planned to major in either Business or Engineering, based on their replies to the Undergraduate Survey. Engineering was the planned major for almost 30% of the international students as compared to only 11% of the domestic students. Business administration was the planned major for 23% of the international respondents and 20% of the domestic respondents. About 15% of the international students and 18% of the domestic students had not yet decided on a major. These results are similar in most respects to those obtained in the fall 1980 ACE Survey of first-time international and domestic freshmen(see OIS Research Memo 81-103). However, a larger percentage of first-time freshmen international students indicated they would pursue engineering as a major than did international undergraduate respondents to this survey.

Table Four

Majors Planned by
Undergraduate Survey Respondents*

	International Students (n=52)	Domestic Students (n=366)
Business Administration	23%	20%
Engineering	29%	11%
Fine Arts	+	1%
Humanities	2%	1%
Natural Sciences & Mathematics	4%	10%
Social Sciences & Communications	8%	18%
"Other"	19%	21%
Undecided	15%	18%

* Information taken from the Office of Institutional Studies' Spring 1980 Undergraduate Survey

+ Item selected by less than 1% of the respondents

* *About 50% of USC's undergraduates plan to earn at least a masters degree during their careers; 37% of the international and 20% of the domestic undergraduates plan masters degrees at USC* (see Table Five)

International and domestic respondents to the Undergraduate Survey displayed similar patterns in terns of the highest degree they planned to obtain during their careers. Just over 25% of both groups anticipated bachelors degrees, while about 50% anticipated masters degrees.

The pattern for degrees planned at USC was somewhat different. Almost 50% of the international student respondents planned no more than bachelors degrees at USC, compared with 69% of the domestic respondents. However, 37% of the international undergraduates planned degrees through the masters level at USC, compared with only 20% of the domestic undergraduates. Although percentages were somewhat different, response patterns for international and domestic first-time freshman respondents to the fall 1980 ACE Freshman Survey were similar(see OIS Research Memo 81-103).

Table Five

Highest Degree Planned...
by
Undergraduate Survey Respondents*

	...During Career		...at USC	
	International Students (n=52)	Domestic Students (n=337)	International Students (n=52)	Domestic Students (n=337)
AB/BS	27%	28%	49%	69%
AM/MS	51%	46%	37%	20%
JD	4%	8%	2%	3%
MD/DDS	6%	9%	4%	6%
PhD/EdD	12%	9%	8%	2%

* Information taken from the Office of Institutional Studies' Spring 1980 Undergraduate Student Survey

C. Individual Goals

* *"Obtaining a degree" was the most important academically related goal of both international and domestic undergraduates* (see Table Six)

International and domestic respondents to the Undergraduate Survey appeared to attach approximately the same degree of importance to five academically-related goals. The relative order of importance of the five goals was almost identical, with "obtaining a degree" the most important.

* *Meeting "socially and professionally valuable people" was the most important of 4 social goals to international students; forming "close personal friendships" was the most important to domestic students* (see Table Six)

International and domestic respondents to the Undergraduate Survey appeared to differ in the magnitude of importance attached to four socially-related goals. The most important social goal according to international students was to "meet socially and professionally valuable people"; the most important goal for domestic students was to form close personal friendships. Relatively speaking, the least important of four social goals was to "become active in student life and campus activities".

* *Becoming "independent, self-reliant, adaptable" was the most important of 4 personal goals to both international and domestic undergraduates* (see Table Six)

International and domestic respondents to the Undergraduate Survey appeared to differ about the relative and absolute importance of 4 personal goals. Although each group selected becoming "independent, self-reliant, adaptable" as the most important of the four, 10% more international undergraduates attached importance to this goal than did domestic undergraduates. The relative order of importance of the goals differed for each group. All goals, however, were indicated as important by at least 69% of each group.

Table Six

Number and % of Undergraduate Survey Respondents Indicating Selected Goals were Important/Very Important*

	International Students**		Domestic Students**	
	n=	%	n=	%
Academic Goals				
-Meet academic requirements of a profession	42	91%	321	87%
-Obtain a degree	45	98	338	92
-Discover career interests	34	74	295	80
-Improve prospects for high income	30	65	254	69
-Acquire specific job skills	39	85	273	74
Social Goals				
-Increase effectiveness of interpersonal relations	25	54%	246	67%
-Become active in student life and campus activities	14	30	112	31
-Meet socially and professionally valuable people	32	70	215	59
-Form close personal friendships	30	65	248	68
Personal Goals				
-Understand self better	33	72%	288	78%
-Increase self-confidence	37	80	266	72
-Improve ability to get along with others	35	76	252	69
-Become independent, self-reliant, adaptable	42	91	299	81

*Information taken from the Office of Institutional Studies' Spring 1980 Undergraduate Student Survey

**46 international undergraduates and 367 domestic undergraduates rated the importance of each goal on a 1-5 scale (1=not important to 5=very important)

D. Problem Areas

* *"Cost of USC" was indicated by more international and domestic undergraduates than any other of 44 potential problem areas* (see Table Seven)

The problem area indicated by international and domestic respondents to the Undergraduate Survey as most serious was the "cost of USC". At least 70% of both groups indicated this was a severe problem for them.

Table Seven

Problem Areas at USC Indicated by at Least 40% of the Undergraduate Survey Respondents as Serious (response= 4 or 5)

Problem Area**	International Students (n=52)	Domestic Students (n=375)
Parking	59%	54%
Crime	57%	67%
Financial Burden on Parents	45%	+
Cost of USC	71%	70%
Registration Procedures	50%	40%
Help from Staff	+	40%
Finding a Job After Graduation	42%	+
Availability of Required Classes	41%	+
Inexpensive & Nutritious Meals	57%	48%
Housing Availability	48%	35%
Housing Cost	53%	55%

* Information taken from the Office of Institutional Studies' Spring 1980 Undergraduate Student Survey

** Students rated how serious a problem they had in each of 44 areas using a 1-5 scale (1= not a problem to 5= a serious problem)

* *The 5 most serious problem areas among 44 possible choices were identical for both international and domestic undergraduates* (see Table Seven)

Although the order of importance was somewhat different, international and domestic respondents to the 1980 Undergraduate Student Survey agreed on the five most serious problem areas for them here at USC. These areas were: 1) Cost of USC, 2) Crime, 3) Housing cost, 4) Obtaining inexpensive and nutritious meals, and 5) Parking. The percentage of respondents indicating these items were serious problems for them ranged from 71% - 53% for the international students and 70% - 48% for the domestic students. In every instance but one, over 50% of the respondents indicated these five areas were serious problems for them.

Appendix I

Characteristics of International and Domestic Respondents
to the Undergraduate Student Survey

The Undergraduate Student Survey questionnaire was sent to a 10% sample of USC undergraduates enrolled during the spring semester 1980. Forty-two percent of the questionnaires were eventually returned, and of these, 74% contained enough information to permit further analysis by background variables(ethnicity, sex, and year in school). Data used in this memo were derived from those students for whom background variable information could be obtained. Results for this sample were not found to differ significantly from results for all undergraduates returning questionnaires.

The percentage of international students in the Survey sample(12%) was similar to their percentage in the HEGIS data(13%). International students made up 11% of the total female undergraduate population reported in HEGIS, and 10% of undergraduate females returning survey questionnaires. They made up 16% of the total male undergraduate population reported in HEGIS, and 14% of undergraduate males returning questionnaires. The distribution of international and domestic undergraduates, by class(freshman, sophomore, etc.), was similar in both the HEGIS and Survey data.